

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An appliance, having a panel formed from a glass/metal laminate comprising:

a metal sheet;

a substantially air-bubble free, thin and even adhesive layer on a surface of the metal sheet; and

a glass sheet attached to the adhesive layer so that an entire space between the glass sheet and the metal sheet is filled with the adhesive layer.

2. The appliance of claim 1, wherein the glass sheet of the panel is exposed on an outer surface of the appliance.

3. The appliance of claim 1, wherein the metal sheet is stainless steel.

4. The appliance of claim 1, wherein the adhesive is radiation curable.

5. The appliance of claim 1, wherein the glass is borosilicate glass.

6. The appliance of claim 1, wherein the metal sheet includes a surface finish.

7. The appliance of claim 1, wherein the adhesive is transparent.

8. A method for producing a laminate, the method comprising:

providing a metal sheet;

providing a glass sheet;

applying an adhesive layer on a surface of at least one of the glass and metal sheets;

placing the glass sheet and metal sheets in a sealed curing chamber adjacent each other;

reducing air pressure in the sealed curing chamber;

permitting entrained air bubbles in the adhesive layer to dissipate; and

connecting the glass and metal sheets with the adhesive layer sandwiched therebetween

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of connecting the sheets includes the step of uniformly pressing the sheets together.

10. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of curing the adhesive layer.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of curing the adhesive layer includes the step of applying UV radiation to the adhesive layer through the glass sheet.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of applying UV radiation includes the step of applying UV radiation through a UV transparent window in the sealed curing chamber.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of reducing the air pressure is performed prior to the step of connecting the glass and metal sheets.

14. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of permitting the entrained air bubbles to dissipate occurs prior to, during, and subsequent to the step of connecting the glass and metal sheets.

15. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of reducing the pressure includes the step of reducing the pressure to 150 mbars or less.

16. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of providing a substantially moisture free air atmosphere in the sealed curing chamber.

17. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of providing a substantially nitrogen atmosphere in the sealed curing chamber.

18. A method for producing a laminate, comprising:
applying an adhesive layer to a surface of one of a metal sheet and a glass sheet using a roller coater;
placing the other of the glass sheet and the metal sheet on the adhesive layer whereby the adhesive layer resides between the metal and glass sheets;
applying pressure to the metal and glass sheets by at least one roller to remove entrained air bubbles in the adhesive layer; and
curing the adhesive layer.

19. The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of curing the adhesive layer includes the step of applying UV radiation to the adhesive layer through the glass sheet.

20. The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of curing the adhesive layer occurs substantially immediately after the step of applying pressure to the metal and glass sheets.

21. The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of applying an adhesive layer includes applying the adhesive to a surface of a substantially continuous metal sheet using a roller coater.

22. The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of cutting the continuous metal sheet at discrete intervals.

23. The method according to claim 22, wherein the step of cutting the continuous metal sheet is performed prior to the step of placing the glass.

24. The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of applying pressure to the metal and glass sheets includes the step of applying pressure to the metal and glass sheets using two rollers which receive the metal and glass sheets therebetween.

25. The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of applying an adhesive layer includes the step of applying a substantially thin and even transparent adhesive layer over an entire surface of the metal sheet.